



# Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

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Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes  
October 26, 2023

## Directors

Zach Bruce

Jason Davis

Brent Johnson

Dave Hunt

James Collins

## Employees

Cassandra Newton

Ayla Morehouse

Kristen Neuburger

## Others Present

Alex Makic, US-FS Ochoco

DelRae Ferguson, NRCS

Don Sietz

The board meeting was called to order by Chair Collins at 6:19 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

## 1. Agency Reports

### a. NRCS, DelRae Ferguson

DelRae advised that the deadline for EQIP and RCPP applications are November 17<sup>th</sup> and provided an overview of the eligible locations and practices. She also provided an update regarding the new farm bill and CSP eligibility. DelRae advised that she is working to get AgriMet stations on the NRCS procurement list for Gilliam and Wheeler Counties. She also provided an update on the efforts in filling the State Conservationist position.

### b. US-FS Ochoco, Alex Makic

Due to technological difficulties, Alex was unable to provide verbal update. He submitted a written update advising that the Ochoco team is working on planning and designing some restoration work on Dicer Meadows which is within the county draining toward the Crooked River. He stated that they are looking forward to a long-term planning on white fir mortality across the Paulina District and hopefully treating that in the long run.

## 2. District Reports

### a. District Manager, Cassi Newton

Cassi stated her report in the packet is current. She provided details about the ODA capacity grant reporting now being tied into the OWEB portal and the potential hurdles that the changes bring. Cassi advised that the NACD NRCS TA application was recommended for funding. Cassi also advised that the staff is working on the next newsletter and she asked the Board for their opinion of allowing contractors and business to advertise in the newsletter for a small annual fee. The Board agreed that it was a good idea.

### b. Conservation Manager, Ayla Morehouse

Ayla stated her report is current. She provided an overview of work she completed and the trainings she attended throughout the month. Ayla also provided an overview of in-house training that she has conducted with staff.

### c. Conservation Technician II, Brooke Moore

Brooke is on maternity leave.

### d. Conservation Technician I, Kristen Neuburger

Kristen stated her report is current. She advised that her focus the past month had been on the BLM grant and preparing for ODA grant applications. Kristen shared that she is

**Meeting Location:** The Rock in Spray, Oregon

**To Join from a computer or smartphone:**

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/954414701> (Contact the office for meeting password)

**To dial in using a phone:**

(571) 317-3122 (Access Code: 954-414-701)

drafting an informational book that will provide Wheeler County landowners with guidance on identifying, preventing, and treating noxious weeds including what herbicides to use, rates of application, and calibration of equipment. She advised that staff will be soliciting a “Know Your Enemy” art contest to collect graphics to include in the book, as well as other noxious weed outreach material.

### **3. Monthly Business**

#### **a. Review and approve minutes**

##### **i. September 28, 2023 minutes**

‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to approve the board meeting minutes from September 28, 2023, director Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **b. Review and approve financial reports**

##### **i. September**

##### **ii. October**

‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to approve the financial reports from September and October, Director Bruce seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **c. Review and approve Accounts Payable**

##### **i. October 26, 2023**

‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to approve the check register from October 26, 2023 as presented, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **4. Upcoming Meetings & Events**

#### **a. Staff Meeting, every Monday**

#### **b. October**

##### **i. 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> OWEB Meeting**

##### **ii. 25<sup>th</sup> LJDWG, 10am**

##### **iii. 26<sup>th</sup> SWCD board meeting, 6pm**

#### **c. November**

##### **i. 1st, 8th, 15th Climate Resilience Training**

##### **ii. 13<sup>th</sup> Obs. of Veteran’s Day (office closed)**

##### **iii. 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> ODA Meeting**

##### **iv. 23<sup>rd</sup> Thanksgiving (office closed)**

##### **v. 30<sup>th</sup> SWCD board meeting, 6pm**

### **5. Upcoming Deadlines**

#### **a. October**

##### **i. OWEB open solicitation applications**

#### **b. November**

##### **i. 13<sup>th</sup> FIP OWEB application**

##### **ii. 17<sup>th</sup> RCPP signup**

### **6. District Management**

#### **a. Delegations of Authorities**

Cassi presented the Delegation Of Authorities for Ayla and herself and advised of the revisions made.

‡**Motion** made by Director Hunt to approve the Delegation of Authorities for Cassandra Newton and Ayla Morehouse as presented, Director Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **b. Policy Revisions**

### **i. Fiscal Policies and Procedures**

Cassi presented the revised Fiscal Policy and explained the revisions to the table displaying the segregation of accounting duties.

‡**Motion** made by Director Johnson to approve the revised Fiscal Policies and Procedures as presented, Director Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **ii. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)**

Cassi explained the need for a DEI Statement and presented the drafted statement.

‡**Motion** made by Director Hunt to adopt the DEI Statement as presented, Director Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **c. Annual Meeting**

Cassi provided a brief update on planning efforts for the Annual Meeting and recommended the Board adopt the resolution included in the board packet.

‡**Motion** made by Director Johnson to adopt Resolution 2023-001 Establishing Annual Meeting, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **d. Financial Audit (*Business Not Listed*)**

Cassi presented the completed audit and advised that hardcopies would be provided in November upon approval from the Board at this meeting.

‡**Motion** made by Director Johnson to approve the 2022-2023 financial audit, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **e. Property**

### **i. WIG Status**

Cassi advised that she contracted with StereoEye Productions out of Portland to produce a short video that will showcase Wheeler County and promote the need for the facility. She advised that the video will be included in efforts seeking construction funding.

Cassi presented the final draft of the conceptual design and requested Board approval to move forward with schematic design and development. After discussion, the Board agreed that the final draft of design was adequate in meeting the desires of the SWCD.

Cassi explained that the next phases will require some decisions to be made regarding the development and sustainable features to be included. Cassi asked if the Board would prefer special meetings to be called or if they wanted to elect a director to be her point of contact for discussing options to be included. The Board advised they did not believe special meetings needed to be called. Chair Collins volunteered to be Cassi's point of contact to discuss options with and provide guidance through the schematic design and development phases.

## **7. Legislation**

### **a. SB775**

Cassi advised that SB775 changed the eligibility requirements for director elections. She explained that it has been said text of the bill does not depict what the actual intention was, but ODA must act on the what is written until corrected through legislation. Cassi

stated that ODA has advised her that both Director Bruce and Director Johnson will become ineligible on January 1<sup>st</sup>. She explained that upon her response to ODA, it was determined that ODA had the incorrect address for Director Bruce and his eligibility should be good, but conversations are still occurring regarding eligibility for Director Johnson. She stated that she would have an update at the November meeting about how to move forward.

## **8. Projects/Programs**

### **a. HB2010 Juniper Removal**

Cassi advised that she received the grant agreement from Department of Administrative Services. She advised that it was contracted with Wheeler County with Wheeler SWCD (Randy Williams) listed as the contact. Cassi further advised that Wheeler County signed the contract as presented, but wants an MOA in place before disbursing funds to Wheeler SWCD. Cassi explained that an MOA cannot transfer obligations of monitoring and reporting, and Wheeler County requested funds for administrative purposes. She advised that discussions are still occurring between herself, the county, and DAS and she would provide an update at the November board meeting.

### **b. In-House Weed Cost-Share**

Cassi advised that a motion was not made to adopt the Wheeler Weed Warriors Program. ¶**Motion** made by Director Davis to adopt the Wheeler Weed Warriors In-House Cost-Share Program, Director Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **c. OWEB Open Solicitation**

Ayla provided an overview of the two OWEB applications be submitted.

### **d. BLM – Priest Hole Restoration**

Cassi provided an update on the bid solicitation for an engineer and the drafted contract offered to the watershed council. She advised that there is a site tour scheduled with the BLM state office folks on November 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **e. BLM – Noxious Weeds**

Kristen advised that she completed one treatment this fall that included Rush skeleton and Dalmatian toadflax. She stated that Ayla assisted her with developing a map and list of landowners who border BLM property. Kristen advised that her and Ayla created a brochure and mailed to all bordering landowners encouraging them to reach out for assistance with noxious weed treatment in the spring.

### **f. NRCS/SNW – RCPP**

DelRae provided an update on the collaboration between the SWCD, NRCS, and Sustainable Northwest regarding the Waterman RCPP application being drafted.

## **9. Partners**

### **a. OWRD**

Cassi advised of concerns she has received from landowners pertaining to watermaster regulatory authority.

## **10. Business Not Listed**

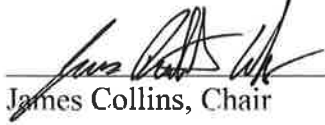
### **a. None**

**Next Meeting** November 30, 2023



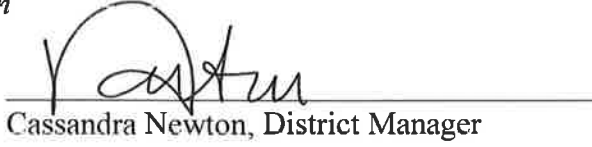
The board meeting was adjourned by Chair Collins at 8:08 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

*Respectfully submitted by Cassandra Newton*



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James Collins, Chair



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Cassandra Newton, District Manager